

the Reformed Church and negatively assessed any departures from that model as 'fragmentation', this collection regards such theological and ecclesiological adaptations as positive developments that allowed the Reformed movement to be rooted and grow in a variety of political and cultural contexts. The thirteen essays are divided into four groups: 'Calvin, Beza and Geneva'; 'Reformed ideas outside Geneva'; 'The Reformation in France'; and 'The Reformations in England and Scotland'. The scope of the book is admittedly not comprehensive. For example, there is no discussion of the Reformed movement in central and eastern Europe, and little attention is given to the Dutch Reformed Church. The intended audience of the book includes both experts in the field and non-specialists. This is meant to justify the use of 'Calvinism' in the book's title, despite the problems associated with this term (pp. 1–2). It is still odd, however, for the editor to speak anachronistically of how Bucer adapted 'Calvinism' in France (p. 2). As with any collection of essays, some contributions are stronger than others. In light of the book's putative unifying theme, it is puzzling how some essays, although informative in their own right, properly fit in this volume or in the particular part to which they are assigned. On the other hand, the contributions of Mentzer and Kingdon are especially good examples that examine the continuities and discontinuities between Geneva and other francophone Churches.

HARDING UNIVERSITY

KEITH D. STANGLIN

Persecution and pluralism. Calvinists and religious minorities in early modern Europe, 1550–1700.

Edited by Richard Bonney and D. J. B. Trim. (Studies in the History of Religious and Political Pluralism, 2.) Pp. 326. Oxford–Bern: Peter Lang, 2006. £37.50. 3 03910 570 1; 0 8204 7597 1; 1661 1985

The reformation of rights. Law, religion, and human rights in early modern Calvinism. By John Witte, Jr. Pp. xvi+388 incl. frontispece and 6 ill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. £45 (cloth), £15.99 (paper). 978 0 521 81842 1; 978 0 521 52161 1

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Inspired by contemporary concerns, these two books revisit the old issue of Calvinism's contribution to modern politics with particular reference to issues of human rights and religious pluralism. Although emerging from different national contexts and driven by different concerns, both attempt to position the Reformed tradition on the side of the angels, even while recognising, as Bonney and Trim write in their introduction, that Calvinists were 'both courageous resisters of persecution and zealous oppressors of others' (p. 15). As might be expected from a single-authored volume, Witte's *Reformation of rights* is the more cohesive and ambitious book. Its author directs the Center for the Study of Law and Religion at Emory University Law School. As he makes clear in his concluding reflections, he wants religious rights and religious communities to play a greater role within contemporary international human rights debates. At the same time, he feels that Churches should pay more attention to considerations of human rights in their internal affairs. To encourage this, he provides an account of Calvinist political theory from Calvin himself to the era of the American Revolution dedicated to showing how 'Calvin and his followers developed a distinctive theology and jurisprudence of

human rights and gradually cast these rights teachings into enduring institutional and constitutional forms in early modern Europe and America' (p. 2). In view of the ample recent scholarship, of which the author is fully aware, demonstrating that 'both the Reformation and the Enlightenment inherited many more liberties than they invented' (p. 23) and that none of the post-Reformation confessions had a monopoly on rights talk, this is no simple task. The strategy Witte adopts is to be highly selective. Rather than examining the full range of early modern Calvinist political theories, he devotes successive chapters to four figures who expressed with particular force and originality ideas associated with the great moments in the Whig narrative of the rise of representative government, from the Reformation itself (John Calvin) through Huguenot resistance theory after St Bartholomew (Theodore Beza) to the Dutch Revolt (Johannes Althusius) and the English Revolution (John Milton). A final chapter then looks at a wider range of texts and authors from eighteenth-century New England. The great strength of the book lies in the richness and clarity of its exposition of each author's political ideas. There are few better introductions to the political ideas of Beza or Althusius. Yet however valuable these chapters will prove to students of these authors, and whether one judges Witte's attempt to create a positive human rights pedigree for early modern Calvinism laudable or self-deceiving, a strict historian's assessment of this book cannot but note that its presentation of each author's historical context embraces their own vision of the persecution or tyranny they endured more uncritically than specialists on the periods in question would currently judge warranted, while the introductory or concluding portions of many chapters make claims that go beyond what the exegesis of the authors' ideas supports. *Pace* Witte, Calvin cannot accurately be said to have encouraged respect for the democratic process within the Church; his church polity was avowedly aristocratic and rejected the direct election of pastors or elders once the first elders had been chosen. Beza never came to believe that 'peaceable heretics should be tolerated ... and religious pluralism embraced' (p. 141), only that the true religion deserved free rights of exercise. At moments such as these, *The reformation of rights*, for all its ample merits, reveals itself to be not merely selective, but tendentious as well.

Persecution and pluralism is a volume of conference papers of very uneven quality, but it has a fair degree of coherence thanks largely to the long and forceful introduction signed by the two editors and to the implicit dialogue among the better essays about certain of the largest interpretive questions related to their topic. Bonney, after a long and distinguished career as a historian of early modern French finance and administration, is now a non-stipendiary priest of the Church of England and chairman of the Europe-Islamic World Organisation, dedicated to building trust and friendship between Muslims and non-Muslims. Observing that 'there are striking superficial similarities between late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Calvinists, and late twentieth- and twenty-first-century Muslims', he and Trim offer this volume in the conviction that a fuller exploration of the Calvinist experience of religious diversity can help inform discussions of how to accommodate religious minorities in the multicultural Britain of today'. One important theme of the book is that Michael Foot and other secular politicians of the left are mistaken in thinking that Europe escaped from religious warfare thanks to 'the sceptics, the doubters, the mockers even' who 'dared to deny the absolute authority of their respective gods' (p. 149). As John Coffey shows, in seventeenth-century England sceptics often opposed the

toleration of religious minorities on the grounds that this weakened the unity of the commonwealth, while the prophets of freedom of worship were zealots from the Independent or Baptist fringes of English Calvinism. As the editors argue in their introduction, both the causes and the cure of intolerance thus lie within religious traditions. Bonney also deploys an interesting model of four levels of pluralism to trace the advance and retreat of religious toleration in Hungary. The utility and pertinence of his model is implicitly called into question by perhaps the richest and most important essay of all in this collection, Judith Pollmann's contribution on religious choice and toleration in the Dutch Republic, which shows that 'Dutch believers were not either tolerant or intolerant, they tended to be both; fiercely committed to confessional difference and often deeply opposed to tolerant policies, much of this aggression was suspended in day to day contacts with people of other faiths' (p. 147). The editors give insufficient attention to the meaning of the key term 'Calvinism' and to the variations within that tradition, but their interest in the contemporary implications of their subject imparts to the volume an urgency and an impulse to seek and to test broad generalisations that sets it apart from most essay collections. Amid the growing number of recent books about the history of religious coexistence in early modern Europe, this one should not be overlooked.

INSTITUT D'HISTOIRE DE LA RÉFORMATION,
UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA

PHILIP BENEDICT

Calvinist churches in early modern Europe. By Andrew Spicer. (Studies in Early Modern European History.) Pp. xiii + 272 incl. 83 ills + 8 colour plates. Manchester–New York: Manchester University Press, 2007. £60. 978 0 7190 5487 7
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This book is an important contribution to the study of both religious history and the development of Protestant church architecture between the mid-sixteenth and late seventeenth centuries. It is well illustrated with both colour and, in the text, black-and-white illustrations, though with relatively few plans of church interiors. Another slight weakness in the book is that Spicer interprets the term 'Calvinist' rather narrowly to include only the reformed Churches of France, Geneva, Hungary, the Netherlands and Scotland. He thus omits, even for comparative purposes, the buildings of the Reformed Churches in Switzerland and southern Germany, those of English Protestants before the 1620s, English separatists in the seventeenth century and Irish Presbyterians. Since part of Spicer's argument is that there were clear liturgical and pastoral principles involved in the design of Calvinist church buildings, it might have been helpful, if only in a short chapter, to examine whether there really were any significant differences between Calvinist churches and those of other basically 'reformed' traditions, as opposed to those of Lutherans or post-1620 Anglicans which clearly were significantly different. Nevertheless in what he does offer Spicer does an excellent job. Though his section on Geneva is a little thin compared with that on Hungary in the first chapter, his detailed chapters on Scotland, the Netherlands and France are exceptionally well-documented. They do not just look at questions of internal arrangement – indeed this topic is in most cases not the primary focus of the discussion – but rather at the whole process of creating buildings for Calvinist worship and the economics of church building. There were